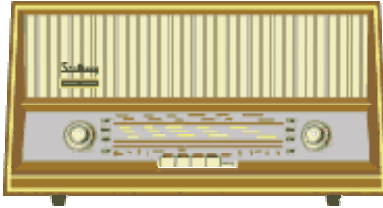


No call to an assignment editor should last more than a minute or two, unless the assignment editor lengthens the call by asking questions. Be prepared to make a short pitch.

Radio

Radio reporters are looking for short, to-the-point soundbites, no more than 20 to 25 seconds long. They are not interested in a lot of details.



The average radio reporter does about eight stories a day.

Radio reporters are also looking for interesting “natural sound” to illustrate their stories. Natural sound is what you

hear in the background of everyday activities. If you are announcing an initiative that replaces paper files with computer files, then you should be prepared to take the reporter to your file room. Open up files for him and talk about the size of the files and what a waste of space they are. That's the kind of sound that will improve your story. The sound of a judge banging a courtroom gavel also is good natural sound for a radio reporter.

Often, a radio reporter is following up on a story he has seen on the wire or in the newspapers. They need your help in turning a newspaper story into a radio story.

Newspapers

What sets newspapers apart from radio and television? Details.



Most newspapers assign reporters to court beats. Beat reporters have more time to spend on stories and more time to listen to background information. Find out which reporters are assigned to your beat and get acquainted. Invite them over for a tour of the courthouse or to lunch to talk about your area of expertise. Call them with any new details. Spend as much time as possible getting to know and staying in touch with the beat

reporter. It will pay off in informed stories by a reporter who understands the issue.

Smaller newspapers, especially weeklies, may not have beat reporters. Reporters may cover a variety of issues, but they probably still have more time to spend on a story. Invite new reporters over to meet the courthouse staff and talk about how the court works. Give them “heads-up” on stories. Remember that today's weekly newspaper reporter is often tomorrow's daily newspaper reporter. This is a vital opportunity to get to know reporters early in their careers and make sure they understand the importance of your program.

CHAPTER TWO: INTERVIEWS

It doesn't matter who is conducting the interview, or whether the interview is for television, radio or print. The important thing to remember is that you need to be in control of the interview. Never lose control of the interview. View the interview as your chance to get your information to the public.

The following are some tips for dealing with the media.

If a reporter calls you, what do you do?

If the reporter is calling about your area of expertise, feel free to provide him or her with the information requested. You don't have to get any prior approval for talking with a reporter about your area of expertise. Remember to stick with facts---not opinion or speculation. If you are dealing with a particularly controversial issue or have questions about how to handle the request, please consult with the public information office about the proper response.

If you don't feel comfortable talking with a reporter, refer him or her to someone who is willing to be interviewed. Any media call can be referred to the public information office. Do not say that you are not allowed to speak or that the reporter must speak with the public information office